

N W A G U A N E K E :

S c r i p t u r e s o f a n
A f r i c a n V i s i o n a r y

Transcribed, Translated and Edited

by

D O N A T U S I B E N W O G A

Dedication:

To the Heirs

Of a New Civilization

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PREFACE

The Nwagu Aneke phenomenon is one that will take centuries to explore fully. In the middle of modernity, at the turn of the millennium, there merges, for no apparent reason, a man who believes he was sent to the World because the dislocations of reality and the difficulties created by man for humanity have reached a drastic pitch that threatens the peace of the world. He points consistently at the situations, ideas and persons which have distorted the world. He has simple but forceful ideas of how the world may be restored.

It would have been easy to discard this untutored and unschooled prophet, born in a remote village in Anambra State of Nigeria, but it is real that his message came with his own script in which it is written down. His proclamation is that those who sent him into his assignment knew ^{and} that people would ^{see} think him as ^a mad ^{man} and that what he had to say and do needed recording so as not to be confusing or forgotten. Therefore they decided to give him the skill of writing. And so they generated in him, over years of painful tutelage, a knowledge of a consistent, syllabic, comprehensive, and graphically delightful script which, from my present survey, is not the same as any known script in the world.

This book contains a few samples of the script and the message which Nwagu Aneke has developed and used over the past thirty-seven years. It has become possible to bring this out after years of Nwagu Aneke's near despair that his work would never be known, out of the positive contribution of several persons.

Nwagu Aneke would like to thank specially Ignatius Igweze ^{of Umuohari} and Ike Manafa ^{of Aguleri} who were the ^{first} early people to recognise him in his towns of Aguleri and Umuohari and kept some hope going in him that ^{and support} there might ^{ultimately} also recognize him. ^{on my part} I would give special ^{thanks} gratitude to Professor Chimere Ikoku, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, who gave me moral and financial support at a time when ^{and} it was not clear where the project was going, and the University was poorly funded for research. I would also like to mention with ^{warm appreciation} ~~gratitude~~ my brother Innocent Nwoga who has always stood firmly behind me and who gave his financial support to this ^{study & publication} project. Financial support also came ^{for the Nwagu Aneke project} from the novelist and playwright Ken Saro Wiwa of Saros International Publishers, ^{Post-Humant} and from Dr. Emmanuel Nnama, an alumnus of the University of Nigeria.

I spent the last months of 1989 as a Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence at the African and African-American Studies Department of the University of Kansas. The environment of scholarship ^{at} the Department and the University and the facilities of the Watson Library provided ⁱⁿ a fruitful background of access to research material and the exploration and articulation of ideas about

Discussion context for

scripts generally and of the significance of the Nwagu script and message. For this I am grateful to the Fulbright Foundation and to my hosts at the University, especially Professor Arthur Drayton.

In connection with the publication of this book, I have to pay most sincere compliments to Aig Higo of Heinemann Educational Books (Nig.) Ltd., who received the concept of this book project with outstanding enthusiasm and pursued me with vigour through his publishing Director, Ayo Ojeniyi, till the project was completed.

Work on this project required ^{contributions of time and expertise from} direct labour of my staff and colleagues ^{at the} and they gave of their talent generously to bring it to completion. Dr. Chukwuma Azuonye of the Department of Linguistics ^{of the University of} Nigeria supervised the completion of the exercise and gave enthusiastically from his literary and linguistic training and experience. He also attracted the co-operation of his colleagues in the Department and this work would have been less efficient in its rendering of the dialect of Nwagu Aneke without their support. I am grateful to all of them for their participation.

My indomitable Research Assistant, Mr. Iroha Udeh, was always at hand, transcribing, translating, cross-checking with Nwagu Aneke, the details of this enthralling script and message. The texts were keyed into the computer by my efficient Senior Typist, Mrs. Cecilia O. Chinyere.

My son, Uche Martin, had to leave his own career to spend ^{several months at Nnifeke} time putting the finishing touches to this ^{manuscript} material. I could not ^{have} imagined that I would benefit so much from his grabbing the computer from me over the years for his own experimentation.

I must end with an apology to my wife, Ezinwanyi Patricia Nwoga. This work engaged me so deeply and took so much of my resources in time and other ^{commitments} ~~wise~~ that she could not but be adversely affected. I am grateful that she was able to overcome her distress and gladly help me with the last stages of the production of this book. I hope the fruition of the project to this extent will be some reparation to her for the travail of the last couple of years.

I offer this book to the public of the world in the expectation that it will help to restore a measure of the equilibrium of nature and man which the world has lost but needs for its own good.

Donatus Ibe Nwoga
January 5, 1990

A NOTE ON TRANSLATIONS.

(included) These notes about some technical issues ^{relevant to} ~~to do with~~ the translations in this book are ^{inserted} ~~raised~~ here for the particular notice of those who seek to be exact in their understanding of the message of Nwagu Aneke. The notes will also be of ^{interest to} ~~relevance for~~ those who wish to use the translations to acquire some familiarity with the script and the language of Nwagu Aneke.

The problems of translation with regard to the residue of meaning which can not travel across languages without significant paraphrase have received serious study elsewhere. Here I want to take note of the issue of concepts, and the issue of language structure and punctuation.

With regard to the translation of meaning I would like to ^{invite} ~~call to~~ the reader's attention to two sets of concepts. The first set has to do with the trinity of forces which interact with people in Nwagu's ^{world view} ~~frame of thought~~ - Chukwu/Chineke/Chi, Alusi, and Mmo. I first thought not to translate them so that they would not be confused with the concepts evoked by their English translations. I ^{have translated them into English} ~~write this note to~~ advise the reader that when one sees the translations of these concepts into GOD, LOCAL DEITIES, and SPIRIT BEINGS, ^{for Mmo} ~~one~~ should leave an open consciousness for their peculiar implications in their context. Whereas God represents the category of deity for human beings, local deities proceed from the phenomena of the local environment or from local power activities, the most important of these being the Earth deity of any community which binds all the people who live in that locality in a bond of morality and ritual so that the community will grow. Spirit beings are non-physical agents - some of them being the persons who have died and lost their bodies and passed on to the spirit world, others being beings that never had any bodies. These share the world with us but can only be encountered by those with the appropriate sensitivity.

The second set of concepts concern the trinity of injunctions to be found in the writings of Nwagu Aneke - ikwu ezi okwu, ilu ezi olu, and ime ezi omume. The context of their full meaning is discussed in Chapter 1. The reader should use that discussion to add the ontological connotations of the Igbo expressions to strengthen the meaning of the rather simplistic sounding ideals in the translations of those concepts into SPEAKING THE TRUTH, DOING GOOD DEEDS, and BEHAVING WELL.

With regard to language structure, ^{the reader will notice a proliferation of} ~~refer to the turning of what appear~~ ^{that you are} ~~to be active sentences into passive sentences.~~ There are several differences of linguistic structure between English and Igbo which the linguists have studied. What concerns me most here is the tendency in ^{the} ~~the~~ Igbo ^{language} ~~to~~ use structures that are active but without any definite subject. This is in consonance with the philosophical attitude in which abstractions are given

ontological agency. I have had to transform most of these sentences into the passive structure in English with the consequent loss of the fullness of the sense of multiple layers of action in the writings.

With regard to punctuation, Nwagu writes without punctuations. His phrases, clauses and sentences run on and on as the thought develops in him in the tradition of oral communication. Occasionally, there is some space between the symbols which correspond to a break in thought in the manner of a fullstop. But any correspondence here may be purely accidental since such space may be dictated by anything else like the shape of a character which does not want another character too close to it. There is more correspondence between turn of page and start of new sentences because one can sometimes see that he squeezes in characters at the bottom of a page so that he can conclude the current sentence in that page. In the transcription of the text, therefore, the punctuation is mine, to give an idea of the pauses and inflections of thought as reproduced by Nwagu Aneke when he read the passage, or as I find necessary to make reading more easy, *and the sense more controlled.*

Beyond this, however, is the factor of the difference between free flow of oral communication and the boundaries imposed by written communication. Let me illustrate this briefly with the passage I was struggling with when this problem surfaced. *This passage ^{comes} is in Chapter 21:*

Ma ndi Chineke vukasili n'anya n'Igbo na Olu bu Umuleri, ma Umuleri amaro na Chukwu vulu va n'anya e jiro ve enelu onye Chukwu ji bia be ve anya ma va e ne-eso ndi ibelibe, ndi ji onu azo amamive digbulu onwe ye na oke-onu, ma va a na-agbali onye magbulu ive mma oso.

A running translation of this would read

But those whom God loves most in Igbo and Olu are the people of Umuleri, but Umuleri does not know that God loves them which is why they have no regard for the person through/with whom God has come to them but they collaborate with foolish people who with their own mouths are claiming wisdom which is a most expensive gift but they run away from the one who has the full knowledge of things.

*Return to main
Text font.*

I have found it necessary to use more punctuations, and turn this sentence, which is already my extraction from a progression of thought, into more sentences to accord with my understanding of the demands of written expression. *(See chapter 21)* This is a standard exercise in the translations.

Translation is, at best, a personal approximation to the thoughts and style of the original writer. I hope that what I offer here comes close enough to make less difficult the understanding of the out-of-time thoughts and messages of Ogbuevi Nwagu Aneke.